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DEPT FOR EUR MATT BRYZA; AF; AND SCA

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY: MFA DEPUTY U/S CEVIKOZ INTERESTED IN
WASHINGTON CONSULTATIONS

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson, reasons 1.4 b, d

11. (SBU) This is an action message for EUR, AF, and SCA.
12. (SBU) MFA Deputy U/S (A/S equivalent) for Central Asia and Caucasus, Eastern Europe (former Soviet Union), East Asia and Africa Unal Cevikoz has expressed interest in visiting Washington before August 2008 for consultations on Africa and the Caucasus. Cevikoz might also be interested in consultations on Central Asian political and energy issues, and Russia and China. Cevikoz last visited Washington in June 2007, along with then-Turkish International Development Agency (TIKA) President Hakan Fidan. The Department, USAID and NSC provided Cevikoz senior-level consultations on Central Asia, the Caucasus, and China. Cevikoz, a former Ambassador to Baghdad and to Baku, is a key Embassy contact who directs Turkish foreign policy in a vast and critical geography. Washington-based consultations would greatly enhance our U.S.-Turkey Strategic Dialogue.
13. (SBU) Cevikoz is interested in Africa consultations in particular because Turkey will be hosting a summit for African heads of state in Istanbul, August 2008. This is relatively new territory for Turkey, which has begun rapidly expanding its relations with African countries and has proposed to open ten new embassies on the continent in 2008. Trade is driving the relationship, though Turkish NGO-run schools have been active in Africa for some time, expanding their presence significantly in recent years. Turkish official development assistance (about \$700 million worldwide last year) is low by OECD standards, but growing. The GOT focuses most of its assistance in Central Asia, but an increasing amount is being directed to Africa. Turkish aspirations for a UNSC seat have furthered Ankara's desire to play a more prominent role in global affairs. Turkey has historical as well as growing trade and energy ties to Sudan, and controversially hosted Sudanese President Bashir in Ankara, January 2008.
14. (C) Cevikoz is a key figure in Turkish policy in the South Caucasus. Turkey strongly supports the economic integration of the South Caucasus and the region's integration with Euro-Atlantic institutions. Cevikoz will want to discuss how the U.S. and Turkey can work together to support Georgia's territorial integrity, namely through confidence building measures to help ease Abkhazia's isolation. Turkey has a sizable ethnic-Abkhaz community and the GOT wants to be seen to be doing something in response to creeping Russian annexation, such as a Trabzon-Sukhumi maritime connection. Cevikoz also coordinates Turkey-Armenia bilateral relations. Washington consultations would be an opportunity to reinforce for Cevikoz the importance of Turkey keeping up the momentum generated by recent congratulatory messages to the new Armenian government and taking meaningful steps toward normalizing relations.

15. (C) Turkey has sought to bolster its ties to the Turkic world and Central Asian leaders, recently exchanging presidential-level visits with Turkmen President Berdimuhammedov. President Gul also visited Kazakhstan recently and reportedly hopes to visit Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan soon. Soliciting Caspian gas resources for Nabucco is a high priority. Cevikoz's visit could be an opportunity to review our shared vision for Caspian basin development and to synchronize our messages to Turkmenistan regarding the development of its oil and gas sectors. Turkish-Uzbek relations have begun to mend after Uzbekistan accused Turkey of harboring IMU terrorists and Turkey's vote in support of a 2006 UNGA Third Committee resolution condemning Uzbekistan's human rights record. The GOT is keenly interested in whether the United States is revising its approach on engagement with Tashkent.

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WILSON